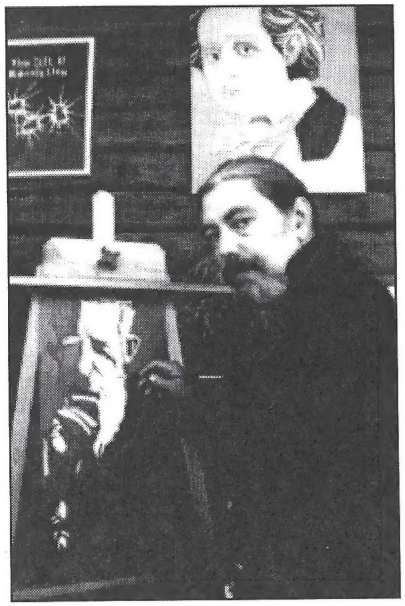


R.N. Taylor *of* CHANGES

The Process Church Of The Final Judgement left an indelible mark on the American post-psychedelic era. Formed in 1963, as an outgrowth of Scientology, by Robert DeGrimston and his wife Mary Ann it began as a form of psychotherapy known as *Compulsions Analysis*. Within 3 years it had mutated into The Process, and as its founders became more reclusive, The Process gradually took a more religious orientation; cultivating a darker, more Satanic outlook. Its theology centred around three archetypal Gods: Jehovah, Lucifer and Satan, with Christ as reconciler. Inevitably, despite proffering a peace-abidding exterior its Satanic aspects coupled with DeGrimston's amoral and misanthropic writings ensured The Process would forever be tainted with a sinister reputation, linked with sensational crimes that (allegedly) continue to this day. Ed Sanders in his study of Charles Manson, *The Family*, believed that the Process was a direct influence on the thought of Charles Manson. Amongst other things Sanders' evidence is based upon the close proximity of a Manson house to Process headquaters on Cole Street, San Francisco; their use of similar phrasing; a shared philosophy (Manson's *Helter Skelter* race war echoed the Processian take on Armageddon) and, of course, Manson's contribution to Process literature. Sanders further described The Process as a mind-bending cult hell bent on causing chaos and not averse to indulging in human sacrifice. An out of court settlement forced Sanders to delete reference to The Process in US editions of *The Family*. Claims and allegations, however, reached fever pitch in Maury Terry's *The Ultimate Evil*. Terry, an investigative reporter, claims that Manson was a Process member, and proposed a theory asserting that Process offshoots, along with O.T.O. crossovers, were actively involved in a worldwide Satanic conspiracy - that began with the Manson murders and continue in an ongoing chain of activity involving child porn, ritual sacrifice and to the 1970s series of killings known as the *Son of Sam* murders. How much of it, if any, is true is difficult to determine. Terry's book fails to include concrete evidence, basing his allegations on hearsay and conjecture. Sanders recently commented that the associations listed in his book, *The Family,* will be vindicated.

The Process disbanded in 1974 when Robert DeGrimston was ousted, and his wife dropped all the Gods bar Jehovah and formed the Foundation Church of the Millennium. In an interesting twist, in 1995 Genesis P. Orridge and members of Skinny Puppy resurrected The Process (if it ever went away) as a sounding board for non-dogmatic ideas.

During the early 1970s R.N. Taylor spent time with The Process. As part of the folk-group Changes he often performed at the Process' Chicago coffee-house. He also contributed artwork to the

Process magazine in the *Death* issue - which also featured Charles Manson's death essay. In *Apocalypse Culture* (revised edition) he wrote of his impressions of the Process. Here, in this exclusive interview, he recounts the relationship between The Process and his musical group, whilst proffering an informed opinion on the continued fascination with this near-mythic cult.

Prior to his association with The Process, R.N. Taylor was an early member of the ground breaking paramilitary group, the Minutemen. A self-declared "political dissident" he's since become a seminal figure in the pan-pagan revival in the USA, and a founding member of the Asatrú Alliance - the largest teutonic spiritual movement in the world today.

A man of action and deeds, R.N. Taylor has written articles, poems and contributed artwork to publications as diverse as: *The Manson File; The Runestone; Outlaw Biker Tattoo Revue; The Fifth Path*; and *Exit* - where his graphic piece: 'The Swastika: Sacred and Profane' lead to its banning in Germany. His poetry has included '... And Finally...' which paralleled Spengler in its fatalistic vision of the future, and 'Faust'; a gothic epic chronicling mans' Faustian impulses. He contributed to Adam Parfrey's *Cult Rapture* exhibition accompanying his exhibit with a booklet of artwork and tracts on the revolutionary frame of mind, and the New World Order. In the near future he will be completing his short story collection, *Secret Tales*, while work continues on *Primal Markings* - a graphic work "exploring the origins, migration and hidden meanings of mankind's most sacred symbols." R.N. Taylor is a frequent contributor to the journal *Vor-Tru.*

What follows is an extensive interview focussing on his folk-group Changes - an early precursor to "apocalyptic folk" - which he formed with Nicholas Tesluk. In a future issue we hope to cover more of R.N. Taylor and his remarkable life and work.

Describe the period when Changes formed? Who were Changes?

Changes was officially formed in the early 1970s. My cousin Nicholas Tesluk and myself began writing some ballads around the summer of 1969. He had a six-string Gibson electric guitar and I had a six-string Spanish guitar. He was attending school in Chicago at the time and living with my parents. He began to practice on the six-string and I had been writing poetry for a number of years. We just sort of tried putting the two together and came-up with four or five songs. Mostly we just played for friends and family and for our own enjoyment. During this period I moved to Missouri for about a year and a half. We stayed in touch with one another and I sent him poems I had written and he set them to music. Whenever I visited Chicago he would play the new material for me and we would tape it on a primitive reel-to-reel mono recorder.

In Missouri, I was sharing an apartment with a friend John Trent DePugh who was a drummer and the chief lyricist for the rock group Phantasia - who were a local small town band. They did a bunch of demo tapes and cut a 33rpm record. So we two while living together wrote poetry daily and bounced our work off one another. It was a very creative atmosphere. We were also doing a lot of psychedelics at the time. This was around the time that the Manson Family blossomed on the front pages of the newspapers. I remember our discussing it at the time - we were both very misanthropic and of a nihilistic frame of mind at the time, totally turned off to the hypocrisies of society, government, organised religion, and the middle class values current in America. We weren't into the love-peace thing as many others around us were. We were hoping the whole world would go up in flames and be destroyed. So we liked the Manson family and their image - we identified with it - and followed it in the newspapers. They were a lot like us: long haired psychedelic freaks into guns and knives and all. When I returned to Chicago, Nicholas and I continued with the music and began to get serious about forming a group. I had a job at that time for one of the big advertising agencies - as a copywriter for TV commercials. I met a lady there and she sang and played acoustic guitar. We thought we needed another competent guitarist and a female voice for harmonies. So we began to get together and practice. After about a year of practising at weekends, Nicholas and myself built up a body of work. We still hadn't worked up the nerve to audition at any of the many folk-singing places that existed at the time. I had run into members of the Process on the streets of downtown Chicago and had attended some of their midnight services and began to get acquainted with a few of them. I mentioned to one of the Process people that I was in a band. They suggested that we bring our instruments down and play at their coffee house in Old Town, which was sort of the hip area of that period in Chicago. So we did just that the

following weekend. We did really well, despite the fact that my knees were like rubber bands. I was pretty self-conscious getting up before a full-house of people and performing. I was doing percussion on conga drums, bongos, tambourine, and castanets, as well as lead vocals. We were trying really hard, giving it our all, and our music and performance was received with enthusiasm by both the audience and the Process people. After that the Process folks really seemed to warm to us and get friendly. I personally liked most of them. After we had appeared about a dozen times at their coffee house, I ran into an acquaintance who heard us playing along the lake front and he suggested we go down to a place called the Kingston Mines Company Store. It was a combined coffee house café and next door they had a theatre. They had a night when they held auditions, and we went in and secured a date to play an entire weekend there. On the way to audition, we suddenly realised we did not have a name for our group. Though our music was acoustic and in the folk vein, it certainly was much different melodically and subject matter wise than most of the standard "folk-groups." So, I suggested the name Changes - no-one came up with a better one on that short notice - so we agreed to use that monicker for the group.

"And Finally" by R.N. Taylor appeared in the Processian Death issue, 1972

How did you get involved with The Process, Church of the Final Judgement? What were your first impressions?

I suppose I encountered them, like most people did, by way of their acolytes working the streets, selling literature and spreading their word. They had a lot of attractive young women with educated English accents which were a lodestone for a testosterone laden young man like myself. In addition they seemed to have class and style, with their neat Mandrake the Magician cloaks, Goat of Mendes symbols, and some very well put together and unique publications. They, of course, used a Norman-style swastika as their main symbol - a symbol I have always been drawn to. There was something very occult and Faustian about them. Occultism was on the rise at the time. There were many occult stores and lots of literature coming out. Like I said, I was very much turned off to organised religion - after psychedelics (like most of my generation who had stepped through the "Doors of Perception") I wanted even less to do with it. I also had an inborn distrust and aversion to the Guru cults from the East: I saw them as a bunch of arrogant confidence men, and I think the experiences of the past twenty-five years have proven me to have been right. But yet, I was searching for something more than the obsessive materialism that was current at the time. So, my first impressions of the Process were positive on a one-to-one basis. Yet I knew little of their theology, beliefs or practices.

Describe the relationship between Changes and The Process? How often did you perform at Process meetings and activities?

At least several dozen times, sometimes as a trio but more often as a duo: Nicholas and myself. The weekend we performed at the Kingston Mines Company Store the rock musical *Grease* was premiering their for the first time. We did sets before, during intermissions, and after the show when the patrons came into the café. The Friday we opened a contingent of about fourteen or fifteen black cloaked figures came in and sat stage side - they were from the Process. I'm sure they frightened a lot of the other patrons. I felt real good about their presence and obvious support for us. They were familiar faces that put me more at ease. They rooted and applauded for us after each song setting the tempo of the audience, and requested songs they knew and liked. I can only speculate that they were showing support for us since we had given of ourselves and our time for them and they were showing their appreciation - or perhaps this was part of a recruitment ploy. I would like to think it was the former rather than the latter. There was never anything pushy about them or hard sell in their relations with us. I got to know a few of them better than others and genuinely found them to be quite convivial. I suppose I got to know one gentleman named Father Matthew well (I think he was one of the two Processians who visited Charlie Manson in jail). I also read all of their books and pamphlets and attended some of their organised activities, usually by myself, sometimes with other Changes members, or other associates.

"There was something very occult and Faustian about them"

R.N. Taylor on The Process

You contributed artwork to the Process magazine. What did you think of their Christ/Satan theology? How did Process thought fit into your own philosophy/ ideology at the time?

I was really into art at the time this was all going on. I had done covers for the *Chicago Seed*, which was the main hippie underground newspaper in Chicago, and I had a bunch of posters I was selling through various psychedelic headshops in town. I showed some of my work to people at the Process and they asked me to contribute to their magazine, which I did. Most of it appeared in the *Death* issue - that's also the one in which Manson's letter appeared. A number of the things I did had originally been done for a large Tarot board I had designed. I simply modified them to accommodate the magazine. They also had a bunch of my poster graphics up on their walls at the coffee house.

As for the Christ/Satan relationship, I originally (and perhaps erroneously) saw it as a form of Pantheism that used recognisable figures like Christ, Satan, Jehovah, and Lucifer for various archetypes rather than pagan ones. After nearly two-thousand years of Christianity, I thought they figured these were visages that could be approached easier than say Apollo in place of Lucifer, Jehovah in place of Zeus etc. I also saw the figure of Christ within Process theology as a much different figure than he is in the staid Christian church theology of the West. I saw him as a sort of figure who rises above and beyond the material manifestation and human graspings - more like he appears in the Gnostic or Cathar theologies, or in the writings of the Theosophist Rudolf Steiner; the cosmic Christ, as opposed to the renegade Jewish Rabbi and prophet that lived in Israel and was executed by the Romans at the behest of the Jewish establishment. I saw it along the lines of the Findhorn Christ (the commune founded by Peter Caddy in Scotland). This was the least appealing of all their theology for me. I just sort of thought: I'll wait and see where all of this goes, as I learn more about their doctrines. I did particularly like DeGrimston's various rants like *Humanity is the Devil*, *The Gods On War* etc. They seemed inspired, and they mirrored my own thoughts in many ways and helped articulate them for me at the time.

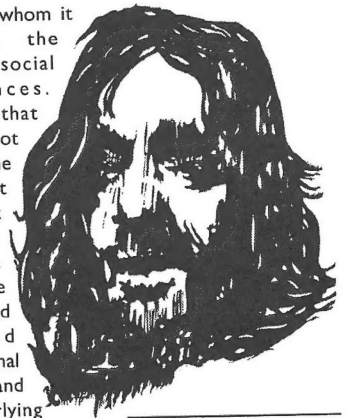
Christ said: Love thine enemy.
Christ's enemy was Satan and Satan's enemy was Christ.
Through love, enmity is destroyed.
Through love, saint and sinner destroy the enmity between them.
Through Love, Christ and Satan have destroyed their enmity and come together for the End; Christ to Judge and Satan to execute the Judgement.
The Judgement is Wisdom; the execution of the Judgement is Love.
Salvation is the resolution of conflict.
The Ultimate Salvation is the Salvation of God.
The Ultimate Conflict is God and Anti-God.
God and Anti-God are two halves of a divided Totality.
And they ultimately must be reconciled.
God and Anti-God are embodied in Christ and Satan.
So Christ and Satan must be reconciled.
The Lamb and the Goat must come together.
Pure Love descended from the pinnacle of Heaven, united with pure Hatred raised from the depths of Hell.

Extract of Process text; from FEAR issue

Recent accounts of The Process describe them as a devil cult indulging in human sacrifice etc. Did it ever appear that way to you? What were Process meetings like?

I have read all of the accounts you are referring to and then some. I've seen no hard evidence of any of that to date. Maury Terry's book *(The Ultimate Evil)* begins by building a hypothesis toward that conclusion and beyond. But all the titillating information always emanates from unnamed sources (for whom it is easy to put words in their mouths - if indeed they exist outside of the author's imagination). The book gets more and more fantastic as it goes along. When I originally read Ed Sanders' book *(The Family)*, it really stopped me in my tracks in relation to what I thought about The Process. Before reading any of these books I had an intuitive feeling that there was something more than met the eye at first glance. Much of their printed matter seemed ambiguous: You could interpret it in many ways and on many levels. Unlike most people who come into contact with an organised cult, and join for emotional and subjective reasons, like wanting to be a part of a group because of the alienation of the modern world, symbols, style, a sense of purpose etc.,

I always approached such things on another level, a more impersonal level, one that attempts to look at the larger context of things. As early as my 12th year I had already determined that Christianity was a dying religion. Whatever impulse had activated and set it in motion was no longer present. As a longtime student of Oswald Spengler I was aware of his prediction of a "Second Religiosity" occurring in the latter half of the twentieth century or early twenty-first century. That a spiritual and cultural crisis existed in the West was obvious to me. The proliferation of cults and movements, large scale drug addiction, suicide, abortion etc. are simply its outward manifestations. So I looked at the Process and tried to determine if in fact this was the beginning of that "Second Religiosity" which Spengler had predicted. And I'm not talking about anyone consciously creating a cult with that knowledge or intention, to fulfil that second religiosity. But, of course, one cannot discount that possibility altogether either. So, what did the Process and its theology have in common with the second religiosities that occurred in other high cultures? In India with the arrival of the Buddha, in the Levant with the Arrival of Jesus, in Persia, with the arrival of Zarathustra, we see a new vibrant religiosity arise which is not just a reform movement of the previous one, but is radically different in essentials, yet at the same time a lineal descendent of what came before it. It still invokes certain known things everyone in that culture can identify with. The religion of Jesus doesn't throw out the Old Testament - it retains it and creates a new radically different one - yet not altogether outside of the previous tradition. The same with Buddha. So the Process still retains the known figures of Christianity, but posits a whole new valuation to them and to the Book of Revelation. At the same time it uses a Gothic exterior and a style conversant with the Soul of the West. It also contains within itself a Nihilism which is also one of the outstanding features of a Second Religiosity type movement. On the other hand I saw the possibility of a Western Thuggee emerging. A death cult, the outcome of world hatred, and a vehicle or dogma for the suppressed spirit of the west to lash out against this materialistic age, one that has proceeded so far that little else is left to overcome, or even oppose it. Perhaps generated by an attendant hatred of a higher and more spiritual type of human being wishing the demise of the stupid and ignorant human beings who have made the world what it is today, and who help to maintain it as such. The other possibility I considered was a mind-control cult set-up by British Intelligence. Perhaps it was all of these things, composed of different factions who had gravitated to this catalyst known as The Process. A movement, cult or organisation can begin with one intention or goal and end with something completely contrary - it has a lot to do with whom it attracts and the surrounding social circum-stances. Legend has it that the Mafia did not begin as a crime for profit organisation, it began as a patriotic resistance movement, and degenerated once the original circumstance and impulse underlying it changed. One thing that did kind of startle me once was when I was asked by a very eager member of the group if I was good at drawing dragons. Immediately what Sanders had mentioned in *The Family* about dragon festooned portable crematoriums came to mind. So I drew the dragon. I don't know if they ever used it or not, it was a Western type of dragon opposed to Oriental type stylizations. One evening, as I chronicled in *Apocalypse Culture* (Revised Edition), we were invited to stay after closing hours. The party running the place that night sided up to me and said they had a get together after hours called an "Aesop," where they sort of got loose and partied, and wondered if we'd like to stay for it. I consulted with Nicholas and he expressed no desire to do so. As he was doing the driving I didn't want to get stuck out during the early hours of the night without transportation, so I declined. I've always been sorry that I did, since that might have given me greater insight to the group and their ways. It might well have been an entirely innocuous gathering. Over the years I have never really stopped wondering about the Process and just what they really were. It took on a sort of a detective story aura. Over the years I've spoken with others who encountered them during that perod hoping for some greater insight. I did come across several written things: one letter in particular provides a glimpse into, at least, the thoughts of one of their London people's views of Manson and the Tate murders. I included this in *Esoterra* #6, along with other odds and ends concerning these questions. It's presented in a "for what it's worth" format.



Manson, a woodcut by R.N. Taylor, 1970

As for Process meetings - they were dignified without being pompous - they were symbolic without being obtuse or a bunch of mumbo-jumbo. They were done with taste and style that fitted the period very well.

You didn't meet Robert DeGrimston or his wife Mary Ann, did you?

No, I didn't have the pleasure of meeting either of them. They were very reclusive at this time.

How did your association with The Process end?

Not dramatically to be sure. We had some difficulties with the lady who originally joined Changes. We dropped her and went on tour throughout the Midwest and Southwestern states. One town we did a concert at was the local college in Silver City, New Mexico. We stayed with some people down there, and had some adventures and fun, and I decided that when the tour was finished I would return and live there - which I did for a year where I pursued my painting and art. It was here that I met Karen, my wife of 22 years. When she and I finally left we went to Chicago and started Changes again, with her playing auto-harp and doing back-up vocals. That's when we started recording the material that appears on the Changes *Fire of Life* CD.

When Karen and I came to Chicago, The Process was on the cusp of dissolving and being reformed as the Foundation Church of the Millennium. Karen did attend some of the last Process services with me just before that occurred.

Authors such as Ed Sanders ('The Family') and more recently Maury Terry ('The Ultimate Evil') maintain The Process was/is an underground cult involved in a wide range of devilish acts. Why do you think they wish to maintain the cult's sinister reputation?

Perhaps they actually believe what they are proffering in these books. Perhaps they are correct, or partially correct or completely wrong but sincere in their error, or entirely wrong and perpetrating a pack of lies. I'm in no position to ascertain their sincerity, or lack of it. But I do know that writing sensational books is a profitable endeavour, and I am sure both of these authors have been richly rewarded as a result of these two mass-marketed books. In the case of Sanders, to my knowledge he has not written any other books since *The Family*. It was recently revised and updated, so I am sure he is experiencing another round of profits with minimal additional labour. In the case of Terry it has helped him in his profession as journalist as well. There was talk after the first book of a sequel - I've heard nothing about that since. I'm sure if he did do another book it would be as equally profitable as the first one was. There is also the possibility of movie sales of these books. *The Ultimate Evil* if adapted properly would make quite a horror classic. So I think there are real good (profitable) reasons for these charges, whether or not they contain any validity.

"The song that really seemed to flip-out a lot of people was 'Twilight of the West'. Often when we finished you could hear a pin if one were dropped"

Similarly, what do you make of the continued fascination with The Process, and even Genesis P. Orridge's attempt to revive The Process as a sounding board for non-dogmatic ideas?

A large part of the continued fascination I believe can be attributed to the continuing fascination of the general public with Charles Manson, the Family, and the Tate murders. About a year ago Manson was featured on an American journalistic program, *Turning Point*, hosted by Diane Sawyer. The program titled *The Manson Women* was the first of a weekly series and it was reputed to have the highest rating of any previous television program! Several weeks later, at an informal get together, I mentioned the program and both of the women in the conversation admitted they had watched. One of them added with a noticeable tremor of giddiness: "Ooh. That man just scares me - he just gives me the chills." Indeed, Charlie obviously gives a lot of people the chills - that is to say he is capable of causing physical reactions to people by the remote control medium of television when he appears. For many people, of this modern day world, this may be one of the few occasions they have to titillate their otherwise numb sensibilities. Quite possibly their own mates are so lacking in the faculty to give them goose flesh, that they find it vicariously in the "bad guys" who despite, and aside from being bad, are in the final analysis still "men." I don't know if all of this is the result of any special personality or magical power on Manson's behalf or if it is the aftermath of 25 years media characterisation of him as the world's most evil genius, or a combination of both. So considering this mass-Mansonism thing afoot in society, The Process is one of the elements in the mystery of this on-going legend in the making. At present it's primarily relegated to the "counter-culture" of musical bands, fringe culture 'zines like *Esoterra, Compulsion* etc. Then again so to was Manson for a long time, and now he's becoming a mass-market thing with groups like Guns'n'Roses doing his music. So I think the fascination with The Process has a lot to do with Manson's popularity and his alleged Process connections. As for Genesis P. Orridge and Skinny Puppy resurrecting the Process thing - well that's showbusiness. I'm sure from a marketing standpoint anyone in close touch with the counter-culture or fringe press would soon realise that the Process and things alluding to it have the potential to sell or attract the dollars of a segment of

consumers.

From what I've seen of the material available from the "New" Process it looks, and reads, more like TOPY stuff than Process materials. I know Temple Press previously had a pamphlet by (Stephen) Sennit on the Process, and if I'm not mistaken Genesis and company have or had some connection with them. To be fair to Genesis I'd have to see more of their materials and talk with them directly about it before I make any final statement on their accuracy or sincerity in the matter. Additionally I'd have to say that part of the mystique of the Changes CD will no doubt have something to do with the fact that many of the songs were first presented before members of The Process - so in a sense Changes is to some extent playing off that mystique as well. I would of course hope that listeners who hear the CD will appreciate and enjoy the music on its own merits, independent of the surrounding factors that existed when it was originally composed and performed.

Listening to 'Fire of Life', it strikes me that the lyrical concerns of Changes must have been at odds with the then musical climate. What were the prime inspirations and motivations behind the lyrics?

Like most works of art I am sure all sorts of influences enter into their creation. Some subjective, some of a wider and more general sort. Just before the lyrics were written I was reading a lot of different poetry and poets. One which I was reading and studying was that corpus of Mediaeval ballads and bawdy songs - the *Carmina Burana*, alleged to have been the works of travelling itinerant German scholars. If I could point to one single source that inspired *Fire of Life* that group of poems would be foremost. Another would be the poems of Asclepiades, a little known lyric poet of Hellenistic Alexandria. Around that same period I was attempting with a bilingual dictionary and English/Greek lexicon in hand to do a translation of his poems in paraphrase. The symbol of fire is a frequent one in his poetry and I even tentatively titled the translation of his poems *Fire of Life*. So, I guess I sort of appropriated fire as a symbol of energy and the consuming nature of life, set against the background of the late sixties and early seventies. It was, at least for me, and I'm sure many of my contemporaries, a time when Apocalypse was in the air - an impending feeling of doom. So *Fire of Life* was saying lets go out, not with a whimper, but with a song in our hearts, in a Dionysian dance of rapture, brave and defiant of our fate, wherever it might lead - whatever it might be.

Changes circa 1970: R.N. Taylor (left), Nicholas Tesluk (right)

What elements attracted you to the writings of Oswald Spengler and Francis Parker Yockey, which I understand inspired the song 'Twilight of the West'?

My father had mentioned Spengler as a possible source of reading interest to me. He had early on said much the same about Nietzsche. I did seek out Nietzsche's writings but never did so with Spengler. Sometime in the mid-sixties, I was living outside of Kansas City, Missouri. Often I would go down to the city to hunt for books. One bookstore I frequented was called the Americanism Bookstore. It was owned and operated by a retired businessman who was basically a John Birch Society type right-winger. His store carried all the anti-communist type Birch society literature and a lot of other things they wouldn't touch at other bookstores - things that were more extreme in nature. I always enjoyed talking with him whenever I visited his store. He was a friendly gentleman who seemed to take a fatherly interest in my reading. I was at this time a flaming revolutionary, full of revolutionary zeal and optimism. One day when just he and I were alone in the store, he leaned over the counter and intimated to me that he really admired my spirit and fight and thought I was one of the brightest young people who had come through the door of his bookstore. He then sort of levelled with me in saying that despite my energy and optimism things would never ever be the same as they once had been in Americas' golden era. He then went on to discourse on the theories of Spengler and the *Decline of the West*. He said that of all the books I could get in his store that "Decline" was the one book I had to read and study if I was to truly understand the future of things. I shifted uneasily from one foot to the other feeling this was a sales pitch from someone trying to get me to buy an expensive book. But I was wrong, and perhaps he could anticipate my thoughts when I said: "Well maybe I'll get a copy next time I come in." He reached out over the counter proffering me a blue volume (the Random House edition) of *The Decline of the West*, saying: here's a present from me to you - all I ask is that you read it and let me know what you think of it. I promised him I would - and I did just that. It was at least three months later when I made the trip to the city again and to his bookstore. He asked if I had read the book, which I had, and we spoke about the ideas of Spengler for several hours. Before I left, he stopped me and said he had another book for me, *Imperium,* which was a sort of sequel to Spengler's work. Once again it was offered as a gift. He went on to inform me that the bookstore was closing that week and that he was retiring and moving to the South-Western area of the country. I thanked him for the books and wished him the best. He looked somewhat sad as I turned toward the door to leave. His final words were: "and the best of luck to you Robert - you and your generation have a long hard struggle ahead of you." That was the last time we met. I subsequently read *Imperium* and the few other extant articles and manifestoes by Yockey and Spengler's other books *The Hour of Decision, Man and Technics* etc. So those two books, coupled with my own observations of the society around me, were the basis for *Twilight of the West.*

TWILIGHT OF THE WEST

...And I watched with wide-eyed wonder the Buddha's stoic stare,
as he gazes out serenely without spirit left to care.
...and the gold-haired thin ascetic's head is buried in the sand,
of the mystic sterile desert - seeks to be one with the land.

...And your women feeling equal to the men who fill their lives
disdain the age old titles of 'motherhood" and "wife."
...and their mild-mannered husbands grant their anarchistic flight,
by the weak-willled neuter feelings of their limp-wrist corporate lives.

...And your churches are all classrooms of humanistic thought,
who preach of economics and salvation which is bought,
...and they measure good in "dollars" no longer martyrs' blood,
and promise pie not of the sky - but lying in the mud.

And I watch the West now now dying, its twilight time has come,
as its melody plays sadly, of that which has become.

...And the politicians tells you, that there's nothing left to fear,
"peace on earth - goodwill towards men" - as he grooms his doomed career.
...and opponents you thought vanquished have come to take their fill,
as they hover on the sidelines preparing for the kill.

...And your well-fed soldiers stand in line amid the morning rain,
but the pulse-beat of their fathers spread so thin now through their veins,
...and the ancient vow to valour lies buried in the midst,
of the years of tranquil living that have robbed them of the test.

...And iconoclastic artists with little left to say,
spawn their works of Chaos - with such thought-provoking names.
...and the patrons of pretension give unmitigated praise,
as they join the fakers chorus, for fear of losing face.

And I watch the West now dying, its twilight time has come,
as its melody plays sadly of that which has become.

...And the money-hungry merchants descends to greater greed,
as he tries to take advantage of conditions he helped breed.
...and the rich are dressing ragged - as the poor put on their best,
and they all don masks of falsehood, as they live their lives in jest.

...And the parents treat their children as though expensive toys,
provided for dull moments - a diversion to employ.
...and professors set the standards "Equality" nothing less,
as they level all their students making sure that none is best.

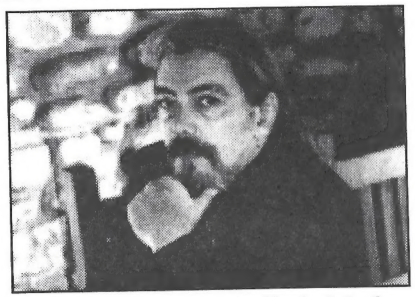
...And the young all shake their fists that the old pollute the land,
as they fill themselves with poisons from the other hand.
...and they all sing praise to progress and the new day that will come,
as they dance their deathly dervish of their minds delirium.

And I watch the West now dying, its twilight time has come,
As its melody plays sadly of that which has become.

Outside of The Process connection, did Changes ever perform live? What reaction did Changes performances and tapes garner at the time?

Yes, we played many venues afterwards. Most of them rather strange in their own unique way. We did most all of the coffee house / folk circuit in Chicago and the other states in the Midwest and West. We played weekends at Mediaeval fairs and outdoor events. Our greatest popularity was the college circuit - they were generally real polite listeners who always came up to the stage when we were finished and asked lots of questions about our songs and all. We even did sets between hard rock bands in nightclubs which were the worst audiences we encountered: rowdy, obnoxious drunks, fights breaking out all over the place and such. I remember one place there was such a crush of people we literally had to fight our way out with all the equipment. Once in El Paso, Texas, we needed some gas, and food money and went to a small bar with a stage and inquired if they could use a band on stage that night. They said no, as they were closing early that evening because they had scheduled a catered affair for a birthday party. We hung around for a while drinking beer and the bartender brought a fellow over and introduced him to us and said he was the one running the party and he'd like to hire us to play at it. Which we did. When the party was over they invited us to follow them over to a house where they were going to continue the party. Well to make a long story short we went to the house - a big Victorian mansion. It was a a really regal setting. They had fireplaces going in all the rooms and there were literally hundreds of candle tapers burning as the only light. Anyway these folks turned out to be some sort of Satanic cult; one of the people ran an occult store in downtown El Paso where they sold all sorts of voodoo stuff. They passed

some cake or brownies around on plates and it must have been laced with LSD. Both Nicholas and I didn't leave till the early morning hours of the night, and we must have sat in the car for several hours before we attempted to drive - that's how disoriented we were. But, all in, we had a great time with these people. At the party we traded off turns doing music with one individual who was a great classical guitar virtuoso named Dennis. So we met a lot of people out there



R.N. Taylor photographed in the loft of Thordarson Viking Hall, Rock Island, Wisconsin, Fall 1995.

and most of them liked our material and treated us real well. The song that really seemed to flip-out a lot of people was *Twilight of the West*. Often when we finished you could hear a pin if one were dropped. We even did place-mats with the lyrics of "Twilight" - we didn't want them to miss what we were saying. Most of these coffee house scenes were havens for leftists and Marxists of one stripe or another. As for tapes we took them around to various big record companies (that's the only kind there were for the most part) and couldn't get past the door. Several exceptions to that were: Ray Stevens, the country and western comedy singer, who had his office in Atlanta. Despite his not having any interest in our type of music he was a down to earth human being who had time to invite you into his office, listen to your tape and discuss it with you. MCA in Nashville was another company of the time which had an open door policy, the same thing with Roy Clark. It seemed like the country and western people were the best folks to deal with: no airs, no pretensions. They conducted themselves like you might expect Americans to be - down to earth. In places like New York, L.A., and Chicago you would run into another type, a sort of cabal of people who had none of these virtues - they were arrogant, impolite, too busy in their "bigness" to be bothered by "nobodies." Mercury Records, Chicago, stand out prominently in my memory when I think of these types. But the economic recession that set in the 1970s hit these people really hard and was the precursor to many small labels getting off the ground - ones that didn't have a backlog of contract liabilities with big name artists. Today the Japanese are buying up a lot of the older and bigger record companies and replacing these sort of creeps I've described.

How did you feel when Michael Moynihan approached you to (belatedly) issue the works of Changes? Are some of the songs rerecordings? In retrospect what do you think of Changes?

Basically what occurred was that I began to self-publish a series of small poetry chap books of my own. It started with one with Haiku poems accompanied by brush paintings my wife Karen did. It was done in place of a Yule card - sent to friends and associates. Michael was one of those people who received one. I never published it with any great expectations - just something I could share with those I care about. I did a second booklet with a selection of my prose poems titled *Beginnings*, followed by one titled *Lyrics and Ballads*, this was the one with lyrics from Changes' songs, and then I published *The Stranger in the Mirror* which consists of three rather long ballads plus *Twilight of the West*. I sent these out to friends and associates as well over the next year. A few friends ran reviews in their 'zines - which were not at all solicited - and I started getting inquiries from strangers about purchasing the booklets, which they had either read from books sent to friends or had read about in one of the half-dozen reviews. Next thing a local bookstore is ordering copies and there's a review in my local county newspaper. I got asked to go on radio to read and discuss some of the poems. Then I got asked to do a reading live on stage at an auditorium. This ends up being replayed on radio. Somewhere amidst all of that Michael inquires if I have any tapes or demos of the poems with the music. I did - and sent them to him. I was really embarrassed when I did - since they never, in my estimation, matched up with our live performances. The recording technology of the time was real primitive to what it is now. Michael suggested that he might be interested in producing some of the music from our main demo, and went onto say that we could bring up the quality by remixing it through digital. I certainly didn't want to discourage him if he thought it was worth doing. It was very gratifying for both Nicholas and myself. I respect Michael's capacity for taste and sensibility about music and art as much as anyone. So Nicholas sent me the old reel-to-reel tapes. Michael came to visit and fortunately I had an old friend that still had a Sony reel-to-reel tape deck which he left with me for the purpose of listening to all our music. It also gave us the opportunity to queue the tracks so that when we did go into the studio to remix we pretty much knew what to do and where to go. Despite that advantage the actual remix was a gruelling affair that began about one in the afternoon and didn't finish till the following morning. One bonus we happened upon was the *Twilight of the West* track - it was on a half-size reel I had, and on mono. We subsequently doubled the dubbing and brought the gain up on the computer. The tape it was on was literally stretching and falling apart. I think that if we had to run it a time or two more it would have self-destructed. Aside from saving it as a curiosity - it enabled us to do a remake of it for a future collection - as neither Nicholas nor myself could quite remember what the chords or the melody was like after so many years. When Michael first read the lyrics to "Twilight" he knew exactly what they meant and the source from which they had been inspired. Back when we were performing that number no-one I can remember ever knew what it was about. Michael did. The first person I ever read that poem to was a fellow poet, Robert Daugherty, who careered out of the room laughing. Between gasps he characterised it as a doggerel verse. I just stood there with the poem in my hand, deadpan and speechless, as he tried unsuccessfully to collect himself - so hilarious he thought it to be. That was 1971. I often wonder if he would still find it so hilarious or nonsensical in 1997, while peering out at the world as it exists today?

None of the songs appearing on *Fire of Life* are new renditions. They are all from original vintage recordings. In February of 1995 Nicholas and myself reconvened in a Denver studio and in three days recorded 13 short songs, including a remake of *Twilight of the West* and for the first time *Icarus* which appears on the 7 inch record. It was one of a dozen songs I composed myself after the demise of Changes. We also did *Legends That We Know* a long (22 minutes) song in its entirety. Those voices have grown gruffer and deeper with time and this material more closely approaches how we sounded live - technology has taken a quantum leap over the last 25 years. In addition we had the assistance in the form of the engineering artistry of Robert Ferbrache. Robert also sits in on guitar and organ and a bunch of other instruments. Once again all that came together by way of Michael Moynihan - who has become the most important linchpin in all of this. Michael also appears on the new rendition of "Twilight". Also a remix with full orchestration of *Twilight of the West* and *Icarus* are in the offing. Changes still has a lot of material on-hand and I hope to get together sometime this year and do another CD worth of material with Nicholas, and with Karen sitting in on a lot of it.

From what I've heard of Changes, in many respect the songs/lyrics are similar to that of Death in June and particularly Sol Invictus in its disdain of the modern world. Are you aware of the works of these groups?

Yes, there is a similitude between their themes and music with Changes. I first became aware of Death In June by way of the compilation *Sacred War* and not long afterwards with Sol Invictus by way of the *Lamp of the Invisible Light* CD. I immediately saw the similarities: some of the guitar strumming that Douglas P. does reminded me of Nicholas' style of guitar playing. Certainly the sensibility and philosophy of both groups are close to Changes. I was very much elated when I first heard these folks. I felt very happy that someone else, someone younger and fresher, had taken up the torch we had bore unsuccessfully so many years before. Tony (Wakeford) and I share a mutual friend and as a result have had some correspondence - I found him to be a witty and sophisticated man.

Whatever happened to Changes? Any more releases planned?

As I related before we have enough new material on tape for a 13 song collection of short ballads and the one long ballad, *Legends That We Know*, which could make a mini-CD. I have artwork for both of those projects should they look feasible. We want to wait and see if there is enough interest in Changes to justify further production of the music. Of course, Storm/Cthulhu Records would have first option to produce and release future material - I wouldn't want it otherwise. In addition I have thought of doing some of my longer poems with synthesiser scores as possible releases. I'm scheduled to do a poem *Faust* for a compilation CD titled *From Men to Mice* which will be released by Warcom.

In closing, is there anything you would like to add?

Yes, thank you for the opportunity to speak with your readers and be a part of a very professionally done little 'zine.

Changes Discography

Fire of Life/Icarus 7" (1995, Cthulhu/Storm)
Fire of Life CD (1996, Cthulhu/Storm)

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